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śrī śyāmananda prabhura mahimā

The Glories of Sri Shyamananda Prabhu

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तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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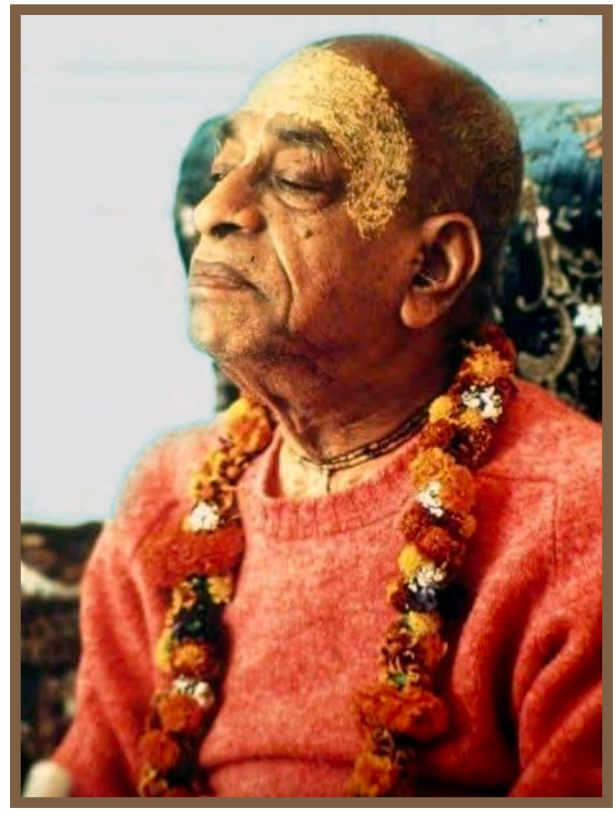
The Flood of Mercy

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

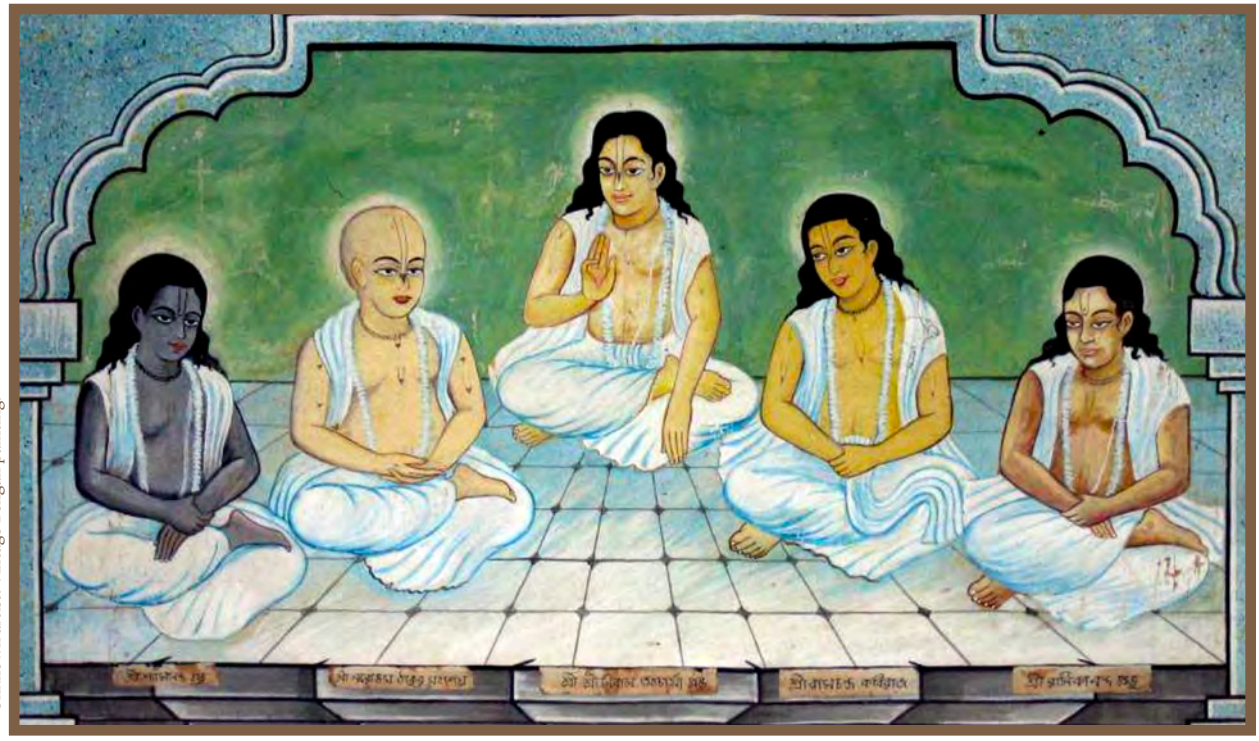
To inundate the three worlds with nectar is the purpose of the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. How this could be possible was exhibited by Srila Raghunath Das Goswami and later by Thakur Narottam Das and Shyamananda Goswami, who all represented the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Now that same mercy is overflooding the entire world through the Krishna consciousness movement. The present Krishna consciousness movement is nondifferent from the pastimes performed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu when he was personally present, for the same principles are being followed and the same actions performed without fail.

— Purport to *Cc. antya* 5.88



Unkown photographer.

Cover: Sri Shyamananda Prabhu. Vintage Bengali picture by an unknown artist.



Unknown artist. Vintage Bengali painting.

Left to right: Srila Shyamananda Pandit, Srila Narottam Das Thakur, Srila Srinivas Acharya, Srila Ramachandra Kaviraja, and Srila Rasikananda Prabhu

Three Styles of Kirtana

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Srila Srinivasacharya, Srila Shyamananda, and Srila Narottam Thakur — these three *ācāryas* spread the highest topics of devotional service to Hari to the less educated people through music and songs. According to the name of their place of residence, a melody [musical *kīrtana* style] has come into being and they became famous by each name. For example, from the name Reneti, which is where the spiritual master of Sri Shyamananda's *sampradāya*, Sri Hridaya Chaitanya, lived, comes the *raṇīhāti sura*. The melody of Sri Srinivasacharya's *sampradāya* is called *manohara sāhī*, and the melody of Srila Thakur Mahashay's *sampradāya* is famous as *gaḍera hātī*.

— Śrī *Vaktṛtāvalī*. Chapter titled, "The Present Yuga-dharma". From a lecture given in Belihal, Midnapura, on 10 February 1925 (during *Gauḍa-maṇḍala parikramā*). Translated by Bhumipati Das. Touchstone Media. Kolkata. 2014.

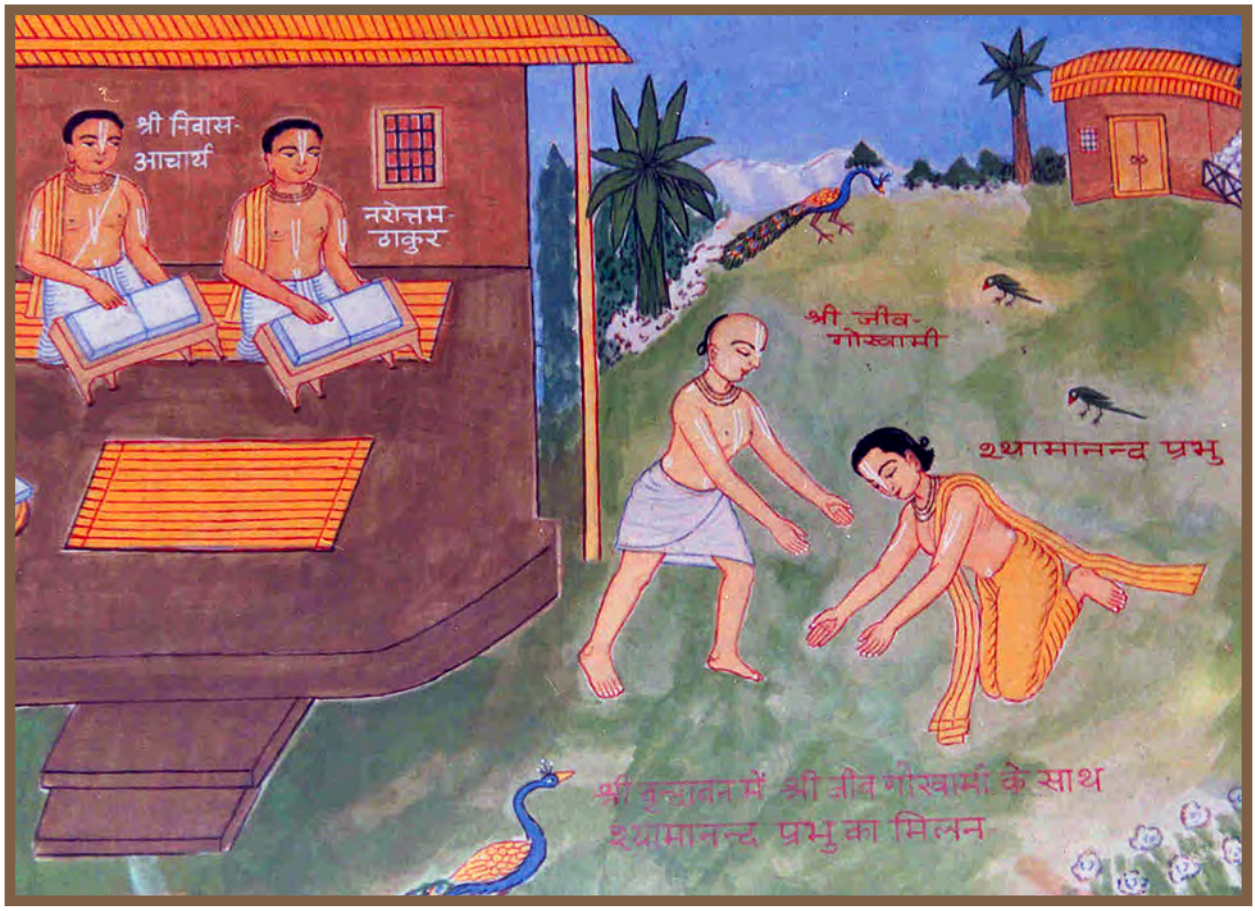
Sri Shyamananda Prabhu

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Shyamananda was born on the full moon day of the month of *Caitra* in the *Karaṇa* dynasty in the village of Dandakeshwar in the province of Utkal (Odisha). He stayed at home from childhood to adolescence, leaving home as a young man and taking shelter of renunciation. Observing his renunciation, the devotees of Lord Sri Sri Gauranga gave him the name, Duhkhi Krishna Das. Understanding that *bhajana* is fruitless without initiation, he took *dīkṣā* from Sri Hridaya Chaitanya, the beloved disciple of the Lord's associate, Sri Gauridas Pandit. [**Note:** Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada writes in his introduction to the *Nectar of Devotion*: "From the date of initiation by the spiritual master, the connection between Krishna and a person cultivating Krishna consciousness is established. Without initiation by a bona fide spiritual master, the actual connection with Krishna consciousness is never performed." As the main aspect of Krishna Consciousness in the age of Kali is chanting the holy names, it is included in this comment from Srila Prabhupada's *Nectar of Devotion*. It

Unknown photographer

A rare photo of the original deities of Sri Sri Gaura Nitai worshiped by Gauri Das Pandit



Unknown artist.

Shyamananda Prabhu meeting Srila Jiva Goswami

may also be noted that *bhajana* refers to all practices of *bhakti*. Moreover, Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.40) that even a little practice on the path of devotion is never lost and can protect one from the greatest fear. Hence, ultimately, no practice of *bhakti* can be described as "fruitless". It seems that here Bhaktivinode is referring to *kṛṣṇa-prema* as the ultimate or true fruit.]

After receiving *dīkṣā* and knowing that it is one's duty to serve the guru, he stayed in the presence of the guru for some time and served him, and with the permission of the guru, went to visit Sri Vrindavan. After coming to Vrindavan, he soon received the special mercy of Sri Raghunath Das Goswami and other Prabhupadas.

Shyamananda's endeavours in renunciation were extremely wonderful. Everyone was struck with wonder by observing his strict *vairāgya*. He joined with Acharya Srinivas, Thakur Narottam and others, and he remained in Bengal for a long time, delivering many foolish atheists by propagating *śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. All these topics are beautifully described in the *vaiṣṇava* texts. It is our great desire to publish and spread the glories of all these *mahā-puruṣas* (great personalities), but we have no way to fulfill that desire because *Sajjana Toṣaṇī* is a beggar with a very frail body. If the devotee community ever nourishes this beggar, then our wish will be fulfilled. [**Note:** This article was published by Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in his *Sajjana Toṣaṇī* magazine. Here he speaks about the magazine as a person.]

—Śrī Śyāmānanda *Gosvāmī* by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur was first published in *Sajjana Toṣaṇī*, Vol.2, Issue 6, in 1885, and translated into English by Swami B.V. Giri.

A Line of Preachers

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

The six Goswamis were preparing preachers. Jiva Goswami sent his three students, Shyamananda Thakur, Narottam Das Thakur, and Srinivas Acharya, with books and told them, "Go and preach!" These three elevated vaiṣṇavas went to preach. Shyamananda Thakur came to Orissa. Narottam Das Thakur went to the eastern side, to Manipur and Assam, etc. And Srinivas Acharya preached in Bengal.

Painting by Shital Banerjee, (1851–1932), Bengali school.

Vijana-vilāsa — ***Pastimes in a solitary place***

Unknown artist.

Shyamananda Prabhu finds the anklebells of Srimati Radharani

They are the first preachers who came after the disappearance of Mahaprabhu.

Then came Bhaktivinode Thakur. Gaura Kishor Das Babaji and Jagannath Das Babaji were not preachers. They were *bhajanānandīs*. Only Bhaktivinode Thakur came out, that is *ācārya.* After Bhaktivinode Thakur came, then successively Bhaktivinode's son Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur came, and then Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

— *My Revered Spiritual Master.* Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar Odisha. 2007. From an evening *darśana* in Bhubaneswar on 31 March 1992.

Vintage painting by an unknown artist.

Shyamananda Pandit's Samadhi in Narasinghpur, Odisha

Shyamananda Pandit appeared in the village Dandeswar in the Midnapur District of Odisha on the full moon day of the month of *Caitra* in 1534 AD. His parents, Sri Krishna Mandal and Durika Dasi, were pious *śudras* whose occupation was distributing milk. Before his birth his elder brother and sister had died. So when their third child was born the parents named him Duhkhi, "unhappy".

From his early childhood Duhkhi manifested strong religious tendencies. At the age of twenty he went on pilgrimage. Arriving at Ambika Kalna, he was overwhelmed with ecstasy upon seeing the deities of Gaura Nitai who had been worshiped by Gauridas Pandit. Hriday Chaitanya, a prominent disciple of Gauridas, was deeply impressed with the boy's spiritual advancement, gave him *dīkṣā*, and changed his name to Duhkhi Krishnadas.

Unknown artist.

Srila Shyamananda Pandit

Photos by Madhavananda Das

Deities of Sri Sri Gaura Nityananda at Narasinghpur at the samādhi *of Srila Shyamananda Prabhu*

With the permission of his guru, Duhkhi Krishnadas later went to Vrindavan where he studied and engaged in service under the guidance of Srila Jiva Goswami. Jiva engaged him in the service of sweeping the Rasamandala, the place in Vrindavan where Radha-Krishna and the *gopīs* engaged in their *rāsa* dance pastimes. Once, while Duhkhi Krishnadas was cleaning the Rasamandala, he found an ankle bell of Srimati Radhika that had dropped from her foot while she had been dancing the night before. There are different accounts as to what happened after that. Some say that Lalita appeared there and pressed that ankle bell to his forehead and gave him the name Shyamananda. It's said that Radharani's ankle bell created a special *tilaka* mark on his forehead. Devotees in the line of Shyamananda Pandit wear a similar *tilaka* mark.

Later, on the order of Jiva Goswami, Shyamananda Prabhu traveled to Odisha to preach the message of Mahaprabhu. As he was coming into the Mayurbhanj area of northeastern Odisha, Shyamananda spoke to his intimate disciple Rasikananda about a demoniac zamindar named Uddanda Ray who ruled like a small king in an area on their path. Shyamananda told Rasika, "Uddanda Ray hates the *vaiṣṇavas*. He has killed and robbed many saintly persons who came through his village. If a wicked person such as he can be changed then it will be marvelous. Let us both go to his place."

They arrived at Narasinghpur in the evening. Uddanda Ray was lying on his bed but not sleeping. Suddenly he saw someone enter his room and stand before him. In a grave voice, that mysterious person told the king, "Dedicate yourself to Shyamananda Ray," and disappeared. Uddanda Ray considered the voice to have been divine and began to think about when he would meet this person Shyamananda. Just at that moment, Shyamananda and Rasika entered the home of Uddanda Ray. Seeing Shyamananda standing before him, Uddanda Ray fell at his feet and worshiped him in various ways. It is said that just by the power of Shyamananda Prabhu's presence, Uddanda Ray became a changed man. He took shelter of the lotus feet of Shyamananda, who then blessed Uddanda with devotion to the Lord. Everyone was astonished to see that the king who was previously so demoniac now knew nothing but service to guru, Krishna, and the devotees.

Uddanda Ray confessed to Shyamananda, "There is no limit to the terrible sins I have committed. I have killed thousands of *vaiṣṇava sādhus*. After killing them I collected their *āsanas*, (cloths used by *sādhus* to sit on during their *bhajana*). Uddanda then produced seven hundred and

Vintage Bengali painting by Sri Kshetra Mohan Das

Sri Sri Radha Krishna and gopīs

eighteen *āsanas* that he had collected from the devotees he had killed. They were the size of a small hill. The now repentant zamindar king then showed them a well that for years he had used to dispose of the dead bodies of the devotees he had killed. Shyamananda distributed those *āsanas* to the *vaiṣṇavas*, and the king also offered clothes and various other items to the devotees. Everyone in the local area was astonished to see that the formerly demoniac king had become a gentle devotee.

From that day on, Uddanda Ray began to serve all the *vaiṣṇavas* with great humility and love. Later, Shyamananda brought his deities, Shyama Ray, from Dharendra and, with the assistance of Uddanda Ray, put on huge festivals in Narasinghpur. Shyamananda later installed Radha Krishna deities there that he named Sri Sri Radha Mohanjiu. In the year 1630 AD, Shyamananda spent four months at Uddanda Ray's house and then left his body there.

Shyamananda Prabhu's *bhajana-kuṭira* and full *samādhi* are still present today in the remote village of Narasinghpur in Odisha's Mayurbhanj District.

Photo by Madhavananda Das

Samādhi of Srila Shyamananda Prabhu in Narasingpur

Also present there are the two tanks that Shyamananda had dug and installed as Radha Kund and Syama Kund. [Note: There is also a *puṣpa-samādhi* of Shyamananda Prabhu in Vrindavan.]

The worship of Sri Sri Radha Mohanjiu was later passed on to one of Shyamananda's disciples, who became the mahant, temple manager. The local devotees tell an interesting story. The deity was maintained by some agricultural fields that the temple owned. No one was there to help with the farming, so the mahant was working in the fields and also taking care of the deities. At one point he

Photo by Madhavananda Das

Deities of Sri Sri Radha Mohanjiu established by Shyamananda Prabhu in Narasingpur

became very sick. Another devotee was brought in to worship the deities, but there was no one to tend to the fields. The time came to plow the land, but no one was available to do it. Understanding the situation, the mahant cried and prayed to Krishna, "My Lord! What can I do? If the fields are not plowed now then the planting will not be able to go on properly. Then there will be no crops, so how will we take care of you?"

The next morning when the *pūjārī* came to wake the deity, he was surprised to find that Krishna's flute was gone. He also couldn't understand why there was mud on the deity's hands and feet. Just at that time a villager came by and congratulated the *pūjārī* for plowing the field so nicely the night before. "What are you saying?" the *pūjārī* asked, "I didn't plow the field last night."

Photo by Madhavananda Das

Site of the field in Narasingpur plowed by the deity of Mohanjiu

The villager looked at him strangely, and said, "Well, come see for yourself!" When the *pūjārī* went to look, he was astonished to find that someone had nicely plowed the field during the night. Noticing something shiny on the ground, he bent down to pick it up — and found Krishna's flute.

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The Glory of Shyamananda Prabhu

śrī śyāmananda prabhura mahimā

A Song by the Medieval Gaudiya Poet
Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakur

are mora parāṇa bandhu śyāmānanda sukha sindhu
sadāi vihvala gaurā gune
gṛha parihari dūre ānande ambikā pure
āilena prabhura bhavane

O friend of my heart! Shyamananda is an ocean of bliss. He is always overwhelmed by the wonderful qualities of Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Leaving his home far behind, he arrived at Ambika Kalna in great joy and entered the home of his master (his guru, Hridaya Chaitanya).

hṛdaya caitanye dekhi ajhare jharaye āṅkhi
bhūmite paḍaye loṭāiyā
śire dhari se caraṇa kari ātma samarpana
eka bhite rahe dāṅḍāiyā

Seeing Hridaya Chaitanya, tears flowed from Shyamananda's eyes in an unceasing stream. He fell down and rolled on the ground in ecstasy. Putting his guru's lotus feet on his head, he fully surrendered himself and stood there in one place.

dekhi śyāmānanda rīta ṭhākura kariyā prīta
nikaṭe rākhiyā śiṣya kaila
kari anugraha ati śikhā-iyā bhakti rīti
nitāi caitanya samarpila

Seeing Shyamananda's humility, Thakura Hridaya Chaitanya became very pleased. He kept him nearby and instructed him. Bestowing great mercy upon him, he taught him the path of devotion and offered him to the service of Nityananda and Chaitanya (the deities of Hridaya Chaitanya's guru, Srila Gauri Das Pandit).

kataka divasa pare pāṭhāite vrajapūre
śyāmānanda vyākula ha-ilā
prabhu nitāi caitanye śyāmānande kaila dhanya
yātrā kāle ājñā mālā dilā

After some days Hridaya sent him to the land of Vraja. Shyamananda became restless with eagerness. The Lords Nityananda and Chaitanya blessed Shyamananda. At the time of his departure, Hridaya Chaitanya gave him an *ājñā-mālā* [literally, "an order garland"] as a blessing.

śyāmānanda pathe cale bāsaye ākhira jale
soṅarīyā prabhura guṇagaṇa

Kangra painting, Circa 1810.

Krishna eavesdrops on Radha

ekākī kataka dine praveśilā vrindāvane
bahu tīrtha kariyā bhramaṇa

As Shyamananda walked along the path, his eyes brimming with tears, he sang the glories of the golden Lord (Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu). Walking alone for many days, he entered Vrindavan and wandered about many holy places.

dekhiyā śrī vrindāvanya āpanā mānaye dhanya
ānande dharite pāre kehā

Seeing the sacred land of Vrindavan he considered himself truly blessed. Who can contain such boundless joy?

giyā giri govardhane kaila yā āchila mane
śrī rādhā kuṇḍera aṭe āsi
premāya vihvala hailā dekhi anugraha kailā
śrī dāsa gosāi guṇarāśi

He went to Giri Govardhan and fulfilled the desires of his heart. Then he arrived at the sacred bank of Radhakund where he became overwhelmed with ecstatic love. Seeing this, the noble Raghunath Das Goswami bestowed his mercy on him.

śrī jīva nikaṭe gelā nija paricaya dilā
teṅho kṛpā kaila vātsalyete
yebā manoratha chila tāhā yena pūrṇa haila
hṛdaya caitanya kṛpā haite

He then approached Srila Jiva Goswami and humbly introduced himself. With fatherly affection, Sri Jiva blessed him. In this way, whatever wishes Shyamananda had in his heart all were fulfilled by the mercy of Hridaya Chaitanya.

bhramilā dvādaśa vana kaila grantha adhyayana
hailā ati nipūna sevāya
śrī gauḍa ambikā haiyā rahilā utkale giyā
śrī gosvāmī ganera ājñāya

Shyamananda wandered throughout the twelve forests of Vraja. He studied *śāstra* and became highly skilled in devotional service. After staying in Gaudadesh and Ambika Kalna, later, on the order of the Goswamis, he went to Odisha.

pāṣandha asura gaṇe mātāilā gauraguṇe
kāre vā nā kaila bhaktidāna
adhama ānande bhāse śyāmananda kṛpāleśe
keba nā pāilā paritrāna

Even the atheists and demons were enchanted by his preaching the glories of Gauranga. Whom did he not bless with devotion? By receiving a mere drop of Shyamananda's mercy, even the fallen souls floated in bliss. Who was not delivered by him?

ke jānibe tāra tattva sadā saṅkīrtane matta
avanīte vidita mahimā
nija parikara saṅge vilāse parama raṅge
utkale sukhera nāhi sīmā

Who can understand him in truth? He was always immersed in chanting the Lord's name. His glories became renowned throughout the world. Surrounded by his intimate associates, he relished the supreme bliss of devotion. In Odisha his joy knew no bounds.

ye bāreka dekhe tāṅre se dhṛti dharite nāre
kibā semūrati manohara
narahari kahe kabhu rasikānandera prabhu
habe ki e nayana gocara

Those who saw him even once could not control their emotions. Oh, how enchanting was his divine form! With great reverence the poet Narahari says, "Will I ever be blessed to see this lord of Rasikananda?"

— AI assisted translation from Śrī *Gaurāṅga Pārṣada Vargera Sūcaka Kīrtana*. Collected by Kishori Das Babaji. Vaishnava Research Institute. Halisahar, West Bengal. 2005. Bengali.

Painting by Abhishek Soni

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Errata:

In page 8 of Bindu issue 593, we mistakenly gave the name "Saptaram Math". The actual name of the temple in Cuttack is "Mastarama Math".

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Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

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